1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

there must be a responsible senior and, hence as a matter of course, the following is accepted:

Ndalu hokuluko la Vava:
Fire is not older than water:

Ciyo wa pindikapo.
Potsherd (or frying-pan) passes between (i.e. keeps the peace).

As potsherd (or frying-pan) keeps water from putting out fire and fire from consuming water, so the elder keeps the peace between the young of relatively equal status.

The hierarchy of age is taken as a matter of course and circumcision camps or other formal 'schools' are not considered necessary to reinforce an attitude which no one would dream of disputing. At the present time there is quite a vogue for circumcision camps (*vakuevamba*) in the southern or south-eastern half of the country. Some affirm that these are new-fangled notions coming in from neighbouring tribes. Others declare the institution to be very old. The Ngalangi people say that they have always had both *evamba* for the boys and *uso wakãi* for the girls. Some tribes require *evamba* of the king before he may rule. Even where the institution is not in vogue, there are associations of coevals (*vakuacisoko*) whose members have definite rights and duties toward each other. These matters are treated more fully in a later chapter. Inasmuch as these age-grade sets are both age and sex divisions, they contain some elements of social cleavage, but their association with the economic and political sides of life makes them a strongly cohesive force for society.

Umbundu Social Structure: Summary

Summarizing the evidence of the present chapter, I wish only to tie in a few of the more important threads so that the pattern of the Umbundu social structure may be seen at a glance.

Although the Ovimbundu no longer maintain the political life which formerly existed, there are elements of cohesion which still give reality to their social organism. These elements all centre in or spring from the kinship group.

With regard to the village, two facts stand out:

1. The Umbundu village is a local kinship unit, with the villagers quite literally the children of the headman-patriarch.
2. Although its political, religious, and social functions may be

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

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CHAPTER VII

ADOLESCENCE

From Puberty until Marriage

The Youth (*Ukuenje* or *umālēhē*); The Girl (*Ufeko*)

THE onset of puberty is generally late among the Ovimbundu both for boys and for girls.[1] The number of individuals who have exact records of their birth is not yet large, and for other reasons it is difficult to collect a large mass of exact data on this subject. From exact data in a few cases, biographical and genealogical data in more, and observation of a great many, I have concluded that, in general, puberty comes for girls at about fourteen to sixteen and for boys at about fifteen to seventeen. I have the impression that this may be due to faulty diet and other poor conditions of living. A careful study of this problem might yield interesting and significant results.

Soon after puberty young people generally stop sleeping in the parents' house. The girls congregate in kitchens and each boy builds himself a house. 'When he builds he does not wait for anyone to act as his teacher at all: he just goes ahead. A boy's father will show him saying, Begin there your house; stand a pole here, another there, and in the ground between, run a trench straight through. Then he will begin to cut poles and after that to build (the house) and thatch it. On the day of plastering it, they will show him how to mix the mud and throw it on, right up to the eaves.'[2] This is the boy's own house in which he will live through adolescence and young manhood, and to which he will bring his bride.

Before his marriage can take place, there must be a great deal of preparation, most of which must be undertaken by the young man himself, just as he has himself built the house. Umbundu adolescent development involves growth and progress on those lines already begun in childhood, but it takes on a conscious urge and direction, for it is now preparation for the responsibilities of adult life,

[1] This is in contradiction to the opinion given by Magyar (op. cit., p. 283). Might it be that dietary and other conditions of life have changed enough in eighty years to produce this result? I think it more likely that Magyar's observations were faulty.

[2] R. Kavita Evambi: manuscript cited.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

The extent to which the order of the *vakuacisoko* exists at present or has existed among the Ovimbundu would be a very interesting subject of inquiry. It is certain that the institution does not exist throughout the territory but only in certain families which belong to the order and pass on membership in it by heredity. Whether there are certain regions where it is or was in the past more strongly held to is not known. It seems to be or to have been more strongly entrenched among the cattle-rearing people to the south, but it is also said to have been practised in Lupolo (Libolo) and even in the region of Luanda.[1] Among the Ovimbundu it seems to have been stronger in the past than at present. Few if any practising members of the set are now known. All 'coevals' or members of the set were in duty bound to render mutual assistance. All had mutual rights to the property of the others without complaint or remedy. These mutual rights seem to have been extended to the extreme limit of having intercourse with each other's wives, nor did the injury or even the death of one brought about by another allow the injured family to seek revenge or legal redress. It was the duty of *vakuacisoko* to bury their fellows, themselves digging the grave and attending to all expenses not already supplied by the family. Theirs was also the duty of burying strangers without family who would not be buried by others fearing defilement or responsibility for their debts. Bastos gives a tradition ascribing the origin of this institution to a wager laid between two chiefs.[2] It seems more probable, however, that it is connected with circumcision and tribal initiation. An analogous set of rights and duties is said to have existed among the Herero between 'coevals' circumcised at the same time.[3]

Tribal initiation for both boys (*oku liseviza evamba*) and girls (*uso wakãi*) is carried on in camps or 'schools' in the southern and south-eastern tribes of the Ovimbundu. These camps are regularly held in Kalukembe, Kakonda, and Ngalangi. Sporadic instances of individual camps have also occurred recently in Viye, Bailundu, Sambu, Wambu, Cingolo, and Cikuma. Even in those regions where camps are regularly held, only the children of certain families enter. It seems that there has been some passing on of the custom by heredity and, in general, there is intermarriage only between families and individuals who adhere to the initiation rites.

[1] Bastos, 1909, op. cit., pp. 67–70.
[2] Ibid., p. 69 f.
[3] Vedder in Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 178.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

881 rites. It seems, however, that it is largely by imitation that the
171 camps have spread from Kalukembe, Kakonda, and Ngalangi into adjoining regions. The girls' camps have been less often imitated
881 in these other regions than have those for boys. Whether these
174 rites may have been taken over by the Ovimbundu from the practice of neighbouring peoples, or whether they may have survived from the customs of a culture previously prevalent in the region, is a question. In favour of the latter hypothesis is the fact that nearly all the neighbouring peoples seem to have or to have had these rites in one form or another and also that certain of the Umbundu kings are required to be circumcised before they can assume office. On the other hand, if the camps were held at all in former times, they must have been exceedingly inconspicuous to have escaped the notice of all the older writers. Bastos (1909) stated 'The Ovimbundu proper do not practise it (circumcision).'[1] Neither Silva Porto (1840–90), nor Magyar (1849–57), nor Pinheiro de Lacerda (*c.* 1790) makes any reference to initiation rites. The missionaries who came to the country in 1880 seem first to have encountered these camps on the Luimbi borders about 1900 but elsewhere hardly before 1915. The conclusion seems to be that it was toward the end of the rubber trade (1911) that the initiation camps were either revived or taken over from the neighbouring cultures to the south and east.[2] Whether initiation rites may spread further among the Ovimbundu or not remains to be seen. Their main emphasis seems to be quite contrary to the more typical trend of Umbundu education. The initiation camps of Ngalangi and Kakonda with their definite break from, and contrast to, the routine of life not only differ from the regular method of instruction but are quite contrary to it. In their methods of educating the young, the Ovimbundu certainly may be characterized as casual. The special times and occasions of education are the regular cycles of the social and economic life and special discipline to enforce specific teaching is used but rarely. The

[1] Bastos, op. cit., p. 50.

[2] Differences in these rites as practised by the various neighbouring tribes would form an interesting study. The majority initiate both boys and girls at or near puberty but some practise infant circumcision or circumcision at weaning or at the appearance of the permanent teeth. The Ambo are said to have let boys' initiation lapse but to attach much importance to rites for girls (Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., pp. 27–31). I do not know of any nearby tribes which have for girls either any excision or elongation of the labia. Various tests of virginity are used.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

hardship and the cruelty of the initiation camps have their parallel in the trading and slave-raiding expeditions of the past, but this is practically the only recognizable likeness. May it not be that initiation camps were adopted or revived to fill the lacuna that came about when trading expeditions ceased? As an 'educational institution' they do not seem to fit into the culture.

Whether with or without initiation rites, adolescence is largely preparation for marriage and full adult life. Traditionally, adolescence is not a time of conflict or of stress. Young people who as children had already assumed in considerable degree the responsibilities of life met the onset of puberty and made the transition to adult life without fuss or flourish. On the whole there was relatively small chance for conflict between the generations, since the place of each is recognized as mutually complementary. Nor was there competition between the sexes. This ordered and well-balanced society began to change with the rubber trade, and with the beginning of the present century changes have come rapidly. Contract and *corvée* labour have brought profound changes, especially for the young men. As for the girls, a few have gone to the towns; relatively few however, other than those who attend a boarding-school, lead a life essentially different from that which has been traditionally theirs. Conflict between the generations, adolescence as a period of stress, delinquence, hysteria, and other problems, some of them characteristic of our own culture, are beginning to appear among the young people of the mission schools. I feel that these manifestations are quite uncharacteristic of Umbundu culture.

As for adult life, there are no recognized divisions or separate periods. Adulthood comes with marriage and marriage is only recognized as fully complete with the birth of a child. The early years of marriage and family rearing are years of much hard work with less time for leisure or enjoyment than either before or after. It is not postponed, however, on that account. If the young man marries relatively late, it is largely because of the very considerable economic burdens involved. Singleness is coveted by no one. The Umbundu ideal is mature life when one may have acquired competence, but at any rate is assured of descendants and care in old age. There is not, however, any ceremonial status such as the fixing of the wax ring among the Thonga,[1] nor does the mature Ocimbundu cease to do manual labour. There may be some

[1] Junod, op. cit., 1927, vol. i, p. 129 f.

and young manhood, and to which he will bring his wife. In this house a kind of trial marriage *(uponji)* takes place. The young man will *oku tumisa* ("cause to send") a male friend to ask permission of a girl's mother and also to bring her to his house each night. The girl is called *eponji*. (The custom may also be called *uvaisi*, the girl *ombaisi*.) A young man may first *tumisa* at about seventeen or eighteen years, if he has sufficient money or goods to make the "betrothal" payment (*itambelo* - "enticements" or *oku lupula ikuelume* - "chasing away jealousies"). The amount of the payment (which is made to the girl's parents) varies with locality, wealth and status, but is usually about one tenth of the amount of the marriage payment proper. The amounts of both payments are increasing rapidly.(1) The nature of the intercourse is carefully circumscribed, and the girl is warned by her mother not to let intromission take place. Proofs of virginity are required on the marriage morning, and there are severe sanctions against premarital pregnancy. Childs' informants stressed that the chief purpose of the custom is that the two young people should get to know each other as well as possible with marriage in view. Ennis however(2) states that *uvaisi* does not necessarily lead to marriage and may be entered upon without the intention of marriage; the girl may leave the man if she does not like him, and if the *uvaisi* is broken off both may marry other persons without any difficulties.

INITIATION(3)

Tribal initiation for boys *(oku lisevisa evamba)* and girls *(uso wakai)* is carried on in camps or "schools" in the southern and south-eastern Umbundu chiefdoms, especially in Kalukembe, Kakonda, and Ngalangi. Sporadic instances of individual camps have also occurred recently in Viye, Bailundu, Sambu, Wambu, Cingolo and Cikuma. Even in regions where camps are regularly held, only the children of certain families enter. There appears to have been some passing on of the custom by heredity, and, in general, there is intermarriage only between families and individuals who adhere to the initiation rites. It is not known whether the rites have been taken over by the Ovimbundu from neighbouring peoples, or whether they represent a custom formerly widespread in Umbundu country. Initiation camps are not mentioned by the earlier writers.

Childs gives little information about what goes on in initiation camps, apart from pointing out that in making a definite break from the routine of life they contrast with other aspects of Umbundu education, and that "the hardship and cruelty of initiation camps have their parallel in the trading and slave-raiding expeditions of the past." His statement that "as an 'educational institution' [the initiation camps] do not seem to fit into the culture" is not very clear. From the few details given by Hambly(4) Umbundu camps appear to be identical with those of the tribes to the east, and here one of the most important aspects of the camps is their ritually-emphasised contrast with regular life.(5)

(1) Childs, personal communication.
(2) 1945.
(3) Childs, op.cit., pp.115-7.
(4) (2) 1934, pp.226f.
(5) See McCulloch, 1951, pp.85-91.

174 there is tribal and cultural miscegenation. Both Umbundu and
171 Vachokue languages are spoken; boys of Ngalangi were seen to wear
[881] initiation costumes similar to those worn at Cangamba by the Vachokue, but on proceeding farther westward into territory exclusively occupied by the Ovimbundu, such initiation ceremonies are either absent or attenuated in ritual.

144 Elende, one center of research among the Ovimbundu, repre-
101 sents the purest Umbundu speech and culture observable at the present day. But in chapter IV some physical resemblance of the Ovimbundu to the Vachokue is noted. Warfare commonly resulted in the taking of slaves, a fact which might account for an apparent infusion of Vachokue blood in some of the Ovimbundu.

174 The historical data suggest a northern or northeastern starting
167 point of Umbundu migrations. Therefore an inquiry into the ethnology of these areas will be useful in showing the kind of culture with which the Ovimbundu were in contact before their settlement in the Benguela Highlands. If historical sources disclose the nature of northern Angolan culture from the year A.D. 1500 onward, such evidence can then be considered in relation to cultural traits of the Ovimbundu at the present day.

The establishment of strong cultural resemblances between extant Umbundu culture and older cultural patterns of northern Angola, would tend to strengthen the evidence of history respecting the northern origin of the Ovimbundu.

131 The regions dealt with in the following summary of ethnological
174 facts are the Cabinda Enclave to the north of the Congo estuary, the region of San Salvador, the hinterlands of Loanda and Benguela, and the area of northern Angola between Lat. 7° and 9° S. and Long. 13° to 22° E. This covers the whole area with which the Ovimbundu are likely to have been in contact before entering their present home.

175 My survey begins with the observations of Andrew Battell in
101 1596. His account deals mainly with the northwestern part of Angola, a country bordering on and actually including territory now occupied by the Ovimbundu, who in all probability came in contact with the Jaggas, whose habits of life are described by Battell.

Torday and Joyce identify the Jaggas with the present-day Bayaka, whose cultural resemblances to the Ovimbundu are examined later. In my opinion, the Jaggas correspond well with the Bihéan section of the Ovimbundu, an itinerant and exceedingly warlike people.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

114 trative posts. I agree that people between Caconda and Huila
101 represent a racial mixture of the Ovimbundu and the Ovambo. The record speaks of painting-houses for girls at Cabinda, an item which agrees with reports from other sources. The jottings concerning tribes from Cabinda to the far south of Angola are too vague to be used in ethnological work with confidence.

There are many points on which the work of A. Schachtzabel should be consulted for the purpose of making comparisons with my
[621] own observations. The chief of these are a note and photograph on
[281] village construction (p. 130); the musical bow (p. 32); the loom
[175] (plate VI); transmigration of the soul of a chief into an animal (p. 51);
[524] and the game of mancala (p. 52). My observations of initiation at
[881] Katoko, Ngalangi, and Cangamba agree well with that of Schachtzabel at Katoko, but I was able to obtain more detail and more
[283] numerous photographs of the ritual of initiation. The spinning of cotton (p. 143) is exactly the process so frequently witnessed now at Elende. Iron-working (p. 111) appears to be comparable with the technique at Elende, but Schachtzabel seems to have missed the ritual. I was not so fortunate as this author in finding the old type of iron-smelting furnace in use.

114 The work of Statham is devoted primarily to hunting and descrip-
136 tions of plant and animal life. The chapter given to a casual description of people among whom he passed is not useful as ethnology; but the book is of service in providing a background of natural history. Information on the tsetse fly in Angola (p. 294) assists ethnological work by showing the determining effect of this biological factor.
[231] Presence of the fly is prohibitive to cattle-keeping, therefore cattle are not kept along the river courses which are infested with this pest.

114 Alexander Barns made no pretence of writing more than a travel book; nevertheless he publishes photographs of ethnological value, gives useful historical summaries, and deals with economic problems of production and transportation.

114 Tucker's book "Drums in the Darkness," though written to
175 interest the American public in mission work, contains many ethnological statements. The chief of these relate to the structure of the compound (p. 37); the dress of women (p. 39); naming of twins and triplets; and other items which agree well with data from the district in which I worked. There are notes on drum signals (p. 74) and
[202] cannibalism (p. 77). Apparently drum signals were in use at Bihé half a century ago. Forty years ago a slave was killed and eaten
[266] at the installation ceremonies for a new king, a point that was noted

3:Hambly E-5 (1929-1930)1934 FPI3 Mbundu FPI3

in the works of Battell, Cavazzi, and other early writers. A description of the whipping of boys at initiation (p. 99) agrees with my own records, but details of the period and place are not given by Tucker. Questioning a corpse (p. 102) is a ceremony I have witnessed and described, but the instance referred to by Tucker relates to the interrogation of the corpse of a chief with regard to his choice of a successor; there are laws of succession, but these may be waived. The ceremony described in my monograph was conducted to discover the cause of death and not to determine succession. If Tucker has any detailed information with regard to puberty ceremonies for girls his reticence is regrettable (p. 142). Tucker says that suicide among women is common (p. 143). A mention of *ocisunji*, a feast for spirits at which meat is offered to idols, is interesting (p. 168) but details are lacking, and the use of the word idols is ambiguous. The information respecting use of charms is corroborative of my own observations in two other centers, Elende and Ngalangi.

The most recent publication on the ethnology of Angola is that of F. and W. Jaspert of the Städtisches Völkermuseum, Frankfort, 1930. Their journey was undertaken primarily to make collections for a museum, but linguistic and ethnological information was recorded among several tribes, notably the Kimbundu, Vachokue, Luchazi, Luimba, and Kusongo. The farthest point attained in a southerly direction was just north of Kipungo, and the general line of march was from Benguela to the northeast, into Lunda. There is very little overlapping in the work of the Jasperts and myself. My itinerary took me to the extreme south into the Vakuanyama country, and to the far east of Moxico among the Vachokue.

My work is presented as a monograph on the Ovimbundu only, and of their culture I treat exclusively, with some reference to the culture contacts observed on all sides of them. The Jasperts do not give an entire section to any one tribe; but combine their information respecting the tribes in a concurrent way, under such subjects as technology, language, and art.

If the sections relating to history and languages are excluded there remain a hundred pages, only one-sixth of which refer to the Ovimbundu; but there is a difficulty in reading through the book without being confused as to the tribe and exact locality under discussion.

The pages devoted to a comparative vocabulary form an important part of the work, and one which I barely touched, though I prepared an outline of Umbundu grammar and made dictaphone records of the

114 Umbundu language. The illustrations in photogravure are excellent,
126 but the small-scale map is difficult to follow.

114 As might be expected in a work covering an enormous tract of
241 country, the information is of a very general kind; I have nowhere
been able to check in any detail on my own observations. F. and W.
224 Jaspert recognize that Umbundu culture is primarily based on agriculture, maize being the most important crop, but they do not admit the importance of hunting (p. 16).

I saw many successful parties of Umbundu hunters, tested their precision with the bow and arrow, and was able to record the ritual connected with the initiation of a professional hunter. There is also a ceremony before the hunter sets out. It would be more accurate to say that, although Umbundu culture is based primarily on agriculture, hunting still retains some of its earlier importance.

114 The diagrams of houses in different parts of Angola are a useful feature of the work. I made many photographs but did not record details of planning.

114 The masks I obtained are exactly like those pictured, but my
881 observations were carried out a long way to the southeast of the point where the Jasperts touched the Vachokue culture. I do not understand from their description whether the writers saw an initiation ceremony. They state that boys are circumcised and girls are excised when very young, even at the age of five or six years. I observed initiation camps and dances at three centers, Ngalangi, Katoko, and Cangamba; the last named is the main center of Vachokue culture. The male novices varied in age from twelve to sixteen years hence they were older than the novices mentioned by the Jasperts. I was informed that there were no excision operations for girls, though at Ngalangi, Vanyemba girls were secluded in the bush during initiation rites lasting for a month.

Bibliographical references to the research of H. Baumann will be found useful for comparative study. His detailed record of initiation among the Vachokue is valuable as a check on my observation, as we worked independently in areas separated by several hundred miles.

Consultation of historical sources gives the following answers to questions which were asked as an introduction to this chapter.

174 On the grounds of tribal tradition, historical evidence, and cultural affinities, the original home of the Ovimbundu was likely to have been in the southwest Congo. The Ovimbundu undoubtedly possess important cultural traits that have been characteristic of the southern Congo region from the earliest time for which a record exists.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Young unmarried girls of the Luvando tribe wear a large number of leg-bands which extend from the ankles to the knees as a sign that puberty has not been reached. These leg-bands are somewhat roughly twisted from fibrous roots and twigs from which the cortex has been removed. Collars of tough, elastic, cane-like substance are worn by Luvando women, and so numerous are these that the neck is entirely covered. These cane neck-bands are ornamented with burned, incised, geometrical patterns, and, in keeping with other ornaments, are thickly smeared with grease and red powder from *tukula* wood (Plate LIX, Figs. 1, 2).

Women of the Vakipungo and Vakuanyama wear heavy coils of brass or copper wire on their forearms. In southern Angola women wear bracelets of twisted wire which are identical with those worn by Zulu women. Bracelets of beaten trade brass, ornamented with incised geometrical designs, are worn by women of the Ovimbundu, Vakuanyama, Luvando, and Vakipungo tribes. Ovimbundu women now depend largely on trade goods for personal ornament.

Ovimbundu men and women are dressed in trade cloth. Unmarried girls wear one piece of cloth which hangs from the armpits to the knees. A married woman drapes herself with two pieces of cloth, a skirt hanging from her girdle, and an upper piece so folded as to hold her baby tightly to her back. Men wear a single piece of cloth as a skirt; the upper part of the body is bare (Plates XLIX–LI). From the region of Kipungo to the southern border, clothing is of leather. The Vacholue wear trade cloth or bark cloth.

Hairdressing is of many styles. Ovimbundu women braid their hair neatly in strands across their foreheads, and small blue and white trade beads are used to decorate the braids. The hairdressing of the Ovimbundu women is different from that in any other part of Angola. At an early age the hair is trained into two long loops at the back of the head. Then these are covered with black cloth which is bound tightly. The two loops are afterwards studded with brass-headed tacks obtained from a store (Plate XL, Fig. 3).

Luvando women in the region of Kipungo dress the hair to form a large triangular projection from the back of the head. Girls of the Vaheneca tribe near Huila mass the hair with clay to form large "cock's combs." Women of Gambos pass each small plait of hair through hollow reeds. Humbe women do not redden or grease their hair which is massed into three high ridges on the top, while at the sides there are hornlike projections. Vakuanyama women dress their hair with grease and *tukula* powder. A principal wife builds up her

S: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

534 Another musical bow named *ekolowa* is of simple construction, consisting of a strip of cane from 54 to 70 cm long and 2 cm wide. At each end of the cane is a projection. A string, when tightly stretched between these projections, pulls the cane into the form of a bow. The performer, placing one end of the bow in his mouth, plucks the string with his thumb and forefinger (Plate XXII, Fig. 7).

Two rubbing instruments are used by the Ovimbundu. *Ogolanda* is a large gourd with a slit in the top along which there is a board cut into sixteen notches. The rubbing of a short stick along these notches produces a sound which is greatly amplified by the gourd resonator. The second instrument of this type is in the form of a wooden bow having its thickest part notched for rubbing with a stick (Plate XXII, Figs. 3, 8).

533 Only specialists are skilled in composing songs, and both men and women are composers. The younger people sometimes go to the old people to learn songs which were popular a generation ago. There are no professional itinerant story-tellers.

There is a chant for funerals which has been quoted in the appropriate section, but no special wedding songs are used. The Ovimbundu have satirical songs humorously describing individual [626] foibles and peculiarities, and as usual in Negro communities a satirical song is feared by thieves, adulterers, or other offenders.

[726] In former days when men were on the warpath they sang, *Okaimbo ketu katito eteke tu lisanumbula tu tandako.* ("Our village is little today, we attack, we extend.") Another war song is *Ocisonde ci likoka ove o kasi vonjila tumdamo.* ("Red ant that creeps along, you who are in the way, get out.")

[484] When men on the march came to a camping ground occupied by another caravan, they sang as a challenge, *Cinene nye? Cinene onjamba kakuli okachama kavela ukuavo.* ("What is the largest? There is no animal largest. The largest is the elephant.")

During hauling and carrying, men sing, *Yende, yende chale, ocimboto lomala vaco.* ("Let it go, let it go, the crab, the frog, with its children.")

482 Lifting loads is always accompanied by noises which suggest that someone is injured. Part of the men make deep grunts to which their companions answer with prolonged groans.

INITIATION

867 Evidence bearing on initiatory rites in Angola shows that the 881 ceremonies are arranged as a process of incorporation into the

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

tribes, for everywhere these rites aim at securing ideas of unity, cooperation, conformity to tribal law, and admission to adult tribal life.

The methods used to achieve these aims are seclusion, circumcision, physical suffering, direct tuition, dancing, hunting, a change of name, and finally a ceremonial return to the tribe with adult status and the right to marry.

The following notes give details of ceremonies witnessed at three centers; namely, Katoko, Ngalangi, and Cangamba. For comparison of these rites with others performed in eastern Angola reference should be made to the books of A. Schachtzabel, and to the papers of H. Baumann (III), and F. and W. Jaspert, whose observations were made independently of each other and of my own investigation.

The dances of the novices at Katoko, where there is a mixed population of Ovimbundu, Vangangella, and Vachokue tribes, are part of the final ceremonies following circumcision and seclusion. The social group formed by this collective circumcision, seclusion, and dancing, is called *ovinganji*, which is the name of the initiatory rites themselves. A boy who has been initiated is not allowed to become friendly with one who has not suffered the ceremony, and all boys who were circumcised at the same time preserve a sense of unity by dancing in a company and moving about together for twelve weeks after their return to the village from which they came.

Circumcision, which is prohibited by the Portuguese government, is still practised secretly in some regions. When circumcision is carried out by primitive methods serious infection may result from the lack of clean instruments, for the knife is, of course, unsterilized.

After the operation the patients are subjected to harsh treatment during the period of cure that follows. The circumcised are secluded in a wooded area. Food provided by the parents is placed on the bank of a river near which the initiation camp is built, and after the parents have gone away the boys bring their rations from the river to the camp. Before eating, the boys are obliged to give profuse thanks to the men who are acting as tutors. In some regions there is no food ration for the boys, and the rule is that each boy must subsist on what he is able to catch and collect with his hands.

Each boy has a male guardian who takes care of him after the operation. Those who have been operated upon are not permitted to wear clothes, nor are they allowed to warm themselves until quite healed. Any infraction of the rules results in a severe whipping.

881 292 During the period of isolation costumes for the dance are made. These consist of clothing of tightly fitting, coarse netting, masks, and girdles which are for the use of only those boys who have been circumcised. The feasts and dances celebrating the conclusion of initiatory rites are of great importance. Women are not supposed to know that the operation of circumcision is taking place, and they are taught that *ovinganji* are supernatural beings who have sprung up from the earth; therefore every effort is made to conceal masks and costumes from the sight of women and the uninitiated. No female is allowed to go near the enclosure where novices are confined.

881 A few days after observing the costumes and dances of the newly initiated boys at Katoko I was in the Ngalangi region at the village of Ngongo, about a hundred miles to the north of Katoko. At Ngalangi two boys of the Ovimbundu were questioned with regard to their experiences in the initiation camp.

It is certain that initiation ceremonies are held at irregular intervals and not more frequently than once in four years. The name given to the ceremonies for boys in the Ngalangi area is *ocinganji* (*oci*, "big"; *nganji*, "judge," or a masked person). When there is a number of boys who have not been circumcised, these approach the oldest men to ask for a circumcision ceremony. The old men visit the *sekulu* ("headman") of the village to request that arrangements shall be made. An *ocimbanda* ("medicine-man"), assisted by other men, prepares a camp in a wooded area. Usually the father of each boy has to arrange that a tutor shall accompany his son to the camp, but sometimes as many as three boys have the same guardian. The guardian receives a small fee, possibly nothing more valuable than a chicken.

The camp is made on the side of a stream remote from the village. Each boy takes a chicken to the camp for the purpose of making a special meal, which is given at the name-changing ceremony which follows initiation. The chicken is eaten soon after the boy has been circumcised. The boy changes his own name for a new one which is announced in the village from which he came. While circumcision is in progress the enclosure is surrounded by male drummers and men who shout, so that any noise made by the boys during circumcision will not be heard.

The period spent in camp is uncertain, probably from three to six months. The rule is that camp is not disbanded until every boy is healed; which means that the confinement may be greatly

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prolonged if even one boy fails to recover. One of the two youths interrogated said that in his camp there were seventy-eight boys, three of whom died. My other informant said that in his camp there were sixty-eight boys, only one of whom died. The informants agreed that the deaths were due to an epidemic of influenza and not to privations or septic conditions arising from the operation.

During the period of seclusion the boys are taught songs and dances used at the ceremony that celebrates the conclusion of their initiation. By privation the boys are taught the value of food and fire. Novices are beaten if they show any disrespect for their guardians, and trifling offences are severely punished. Every boy has to take from the fire a burning stick, which he holds in his hand while running between two lines of men who beat him, and if he drops the stick he has to start his run once more. The boys swear allegiance to one another. A novice thinks that he will die if he gives information to a woman or to a man who has not been initiated.

From his mother, each boy receives food in a gourd which he deposits on the bank of a river near the novices' camp. If a boy dies, a hole is bored in the gourd so that when the mother receives this she will not send more food. Each guardian has a stick which is sent to the mother of his pupil when the ceremony of initiation and seclusion is ended. If the boy has died, bark is cut from both ends of the stick before this symbol of death is sent to his parents.

When the boys come out from their camp at the conclusion of the rites one man and one woman stand on the bank of the river, and the boys pass under the legs of both the man and the woman. When the boys arrive at the village the whole population comes out to welcome them. There is a feast and beer-drinking bout on the day of return.

During seclusion no water is allowed for washing, and the informants laughed as they spoke of the order "wash hands," whereupon the boys merely rubbed their hands together. When the order, "wash dishes," was given the boys rubbed their platters with their hands. On the day of leaving camp the novices bathe in the river. Ablution consists of three dips, after each of which the boy stands on the bank until he is dry.

For two months the boys wear strips of bark cloth. During this period all the novices must move together, but there is no objection to their leaving the village provided they do so all in one company. While wearing bark cloth the boys have each day to attend a cere-

881 mony at which the older initiates dance while the novices clap their hands.

I witnessed the dance of initiated boys at Ngongo, where the [292] costumes resembled those I had seen at Katoko. At night a youth brought for me a set of initiation costumes (Plate LXXVIII, Fig. 1), which resembled those worn during the dance; this he did with great secrecy.

While at Ngalangi, the initiation of girls was investigated. After several days of negotiation with a village headman three female guardians of the girls came from the bush. The illustrations (Plate LXXVII, Figs. 1, 2) show the attitudes of these women and their decoration. There were three male drummers in the orchestra and several women, who sang and clapped their hands. On emerging from the bush the females moved toward the orchestra with their backs toward the players. As there were about two hundred yards to cover, this slow backward movement occupied a long time, since the three women did not take more than a few inches at each step. The dance [535] itself was a slow, shuffling, swaying movement, made while the bodies of the performers remained inclined forward and their heads were bent so that it was almost impossible to see their faces. The women wore no clothing except loin cloths. Each female was [302] plastered from head to foot with alternate bands of red and white clay smeared thickly. These three females are the women who act [864] as instructors for the girls during isolation in the bush where they receive sexual and domestic instruction.

881 The seclusion of girls covers a period of one month. During 304 this time the novices suffer no harsh treatment though an operation is performed, possibly excision of the clitoris, but I am not certain on this point. It was also stated that a corncob is introduced into the vagina. The tribe practising this ceremony for girls was the [171] Vanyemba, living close to the Ovimbundu at Ngongo near Ngalangi in central Angola.

881 In order to corroborate further the two accounts of initiation 171 ceremonies for boys I journeyed to Cangamba in Moxico, eastern 304 Angola. The position of the two first centers visited (Katoko and Ngongo) is on the border line where Ovimbundu and Vachokue mingle, and although there is a mixture of these and other tribes at Cangamba, the culture, language, and physique of the Vachokue predominate. A description of the circumcision ceremonies witnessed at Cangamba is given below for comparison with the accounts resulting from visits to Katoko and Ngongo.

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The compound in which the initiates had been confined for three months was a circular enclosure made of light branches and leafy boughs, at the narrow embrasure of which stood a guardian of the boys, who permitted entrance. In the middle of the large enclosure were seven small cages, each of which was just large enough to allow one boy to lie on his back, and I was informed that the boys lie thus for two weeks after circumcision (Plate LXXX, Fig. 2).

The ages of the boys appeared to be from ten to seventeen years (Plate LXXX, Fig. 1), an observation which agrees well with that made at Katoko and Ngongo. The disparity of age among the novices at each center where initiation was observed bears out the statement that initiation ceremonies are held at irregular intervals, but not more frequently than once in four years.

During confinement in the large enclosure the novices had made masks and costumes (Plate LXXIX, Fig. 1), and when they were pulling on the coarse netting suits, which fit tightly, I observed that circumcision had been performed thoroughly, evidently some weeks ago, for the wounds were healed. Masks were obtained, and these the instructors of the boys were careful to wrap in bark cloth, at the same time requesting me not to show the objects to women.

A few days later these boys returned to their village to dance while wearing the costumes which had been made in the enclosure. At Cangamba the final ceremony lasted twelve hours amid great excitement, including ceaseless drumming and dancing. One boy, who wore a skirt on his fiber costume, lifted this to display an artificial penis of great size (Plate LXXIX, Fig. 2). This organ he grasped in his hand while chasing the women and girls, who ran away screaming and laughing.

At this ceremony there appeared stilt-walkers (Plate LXXXI, Fig. 1) and a medicine-man, a member of the Luchazi tribe (Plate LXXXI, Fig. 2).

Circumcision among the Bdjok (Vachokue) has been witnessed by C. P. Holdredge and described by Kimball Young (*Amer. Anthr.*, XXIX, pp. 661–669). This ceremony took place in the far northeast of Angola. The man described as the *magish* of whom women are afraid, but who is known to the initiates, corresponds to the Uluchazi medicine-man seen in the final ceremony at Cangamba. Of this grotesquely dressed person the men and boys took no notice, neither did he pay attention to them. On the contrary he chased women, who ran away screaming. Kimball Young's description of the enclosure where boys are confined, and his account of the

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881 short fiber skirts worn within this enclosure by the novices, are in
171 agreement with the observations made at Cangamba. There is
304 also a close resemblance between the independent accounts of
[114] H. Baumann and F. and W. Jaspert for the Vachokue, also P. A. Delille and E. de Jonghe for the southwest Congo.

The question of initiation rites, past and present, among people of pure Umbundu culture is important. The matter is more fully dealt with later in discussing cultural contacts and cultural losses, but there are a few points which should not be omitted here.

At Caconda, an Umbundu center of western Angola, Père R. P. Laagel stated that only two years ago he had visited an initiation camp of Ovimbundu boys in the hope of persuading them to return to his mission school at Caconda. My informant stated that the boys were circumcised, beaten, and confined to an enclosure for several weeks. Those who cried out when flogged received a double portion of blows. Poisoning is the fate of a boy who reveals the secrets of the initiation camp to women or uninitiated boys. This is the most direct testimony I have received concerning initiation rites among unmixed Ovimbundu.

881 From Bailundu and Elende I have obtained slight evidence of
292 initiation rites. At the former place, which, like Elende, is a center
171 of the Ovimbundu tribe, fiber costumes were obtained. The mask from Elende is unlike those used at Cangamba, Katoko, and Ngongo. The fiber suits are, however, no different from costumes used at these places. Initiation ceremonies are not held at Elende today, and beyond Dr. Ennis's statement that circumcision rites have been revived in the past fifteen years of his long residence in the neighborhood of Elende, I have no evidence of ritual.

881 The data relating to initiation of boys in Angola suggest loss
177 of the initiatory rites from Umbundu culture, until only a few old masks and costumes, along with attenuated ritual, remain sporadically. On the contrary, in eastern Angola and particularly among the Vachokue, who are farther than the Ovimbundu from coastal influence, initiation ceremonies flourish. At present there is occurring a penetration of initiation rites from the Vachokue area into east-central Angola, which is a region of cultural admixture.

867 The foregoing pages have described certain institutions and social forces which collectively bring individuals into conformity with tribal standards of conduct. The influences at work in this direction may be direct or indirect.

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Among direct educational forces are the home training given by parents and the mutual responsibility of children and their mother's brother, whose reciprocal obligations have been explained. Family life is undeniably an important institution whose power is by no means suppressed by the strength of the village community and tribal organization. 867

Initiation, which may or may not coincide with puberty, is perhaps the most potent direct influence in formation of character and the inculcation of principles tending to tribal solidarity. Formerly warfare and hunting were more important than they are today, consequently initiation rites imposing hardship and emphasizing the importance of concerted action, had a greater social value than they have at present. 867 881

Formal instruction in industries such as iron-working, or professional hunting, indicates one aspect of occupational training. In these instances there are apprenticeship and an initiatory rite. All children are, however, subject to an indirect industrial education through the agency of play, while a few, according to desire and aptitude, become experts in some particular occupation. 874 [868]

At all times the force of suggestion is at work in the home, in the men's council house, and through everyday observation of the conduct of elders. Probably folklore stories also have an indirect educational value, because some of the fables show the desirability of courage, honesty, and foresight, at the same time deprecating cowardice, stupidity, and low cunning. 869

In chapter IX religious beliefs are discussed, and, in connection with these, standards of conduct are outlined. Although the Ovimbundu have a belief in a supreme being and creator (Suku), and although they believe in survival after death, there is no evidence to show that conduct and education are influenced by theological beliefs. Suku, who is vaguely conceived, is far away and uninterested. He issues no commands. Neither is there a belief in punishments and rewards after death. The standards of conduct are based on utilitarian principles which secure harmony and unity. 771 869 [776]

The efficiency of the direct and indirect educational forces of the Ovimbundu is attested by the history of the tribe. The indigenous system of education, supported by favorable environment, consolidated these people so that they became the dominating power in Angola. Moreover, their cohesion has been such that three centuries of European contacts have failed to eliminate all the basic elements of their tribal life. 177

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171 428 this method is characteristic of many pastoral tribes of south and east Africa.

171 611 The Ovimbundu are situated between two systems of reckoning descent, succession, and inheritance; namely, the Negro system of the Congo region, and that of the eastern and southern cattle-keeping people. In view of the culture contacts described in Chapter X, the mixed system of the Ovimbundu is intelligible.

On the one hand the Ovimbundu emphasize the rights of the mother's brother while denying inheritance to a wife and her children, but in royal families the eldest son of the principal wife succeeds to kingship. Among commoners descent is reckoned through both the father and the mother. Therefore the inference is that the [174] Ovimbundu have, by virtue of their position and contacts, made a blending of two distinct social systems, one of which gives succession to office in the male line, while the other gives inheritance in the female line. In their system of burial rites for kings the Ovimbundu follow the usages of the pastoral area.

171 608 Exchange of blood is an Umbundu custom resembling that which occurs widely in Negro Africa. This exchange of blood is the typical Negro form of the blood brotherhood. Another rite is the Hamitic custom of drinking a mixture of blood and milk; this the Ovimbundu do not practise.

171 241 The hoe-cultivation practised by Ovimbundu women is in agreement with Baumann's association of hoe-culture and matriarchal conditions, the latter being indicated by the importance of the mother's brother. These concomitant factors are shown by Baumann (II, p. 292) to be characteristic of a wide area in the Congo basin. To this area may be added the whole of central Angola.

171 567 The factors of slavery among the Ovimbundu are in agreement with all that is known of the treatment of slaves in the Congo area and farther west Africa. Slaves of the Ovimbundu taken in warfare were treated with less consideration than those who passed into slavery to redeem a debt. There was also discrimination in favor of slaves taken in local quarrels among the Ovimbundu themselves. The killing and eating of slaves in north Angola is a custom whose early occurrence has already been noted.

AFRICAN PUBERTY RITES

171 881 Initiation ceremonies for boys and girls are at present well preserved among the Vachokue of eastern Angola; for a period such ceremonies declined among the Ovimbundu, but there is now a

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recrudescence. Masks of eastern Angola most closely resemble those of the Bapindi of the southwest Congo, but the general background of these puberty rites is comparable in Angola, parts of the Congo, and in several parts of the forest belt of west Africa from Sierra Leone to Cameroon.

Usually there is seclusion, hardship, training in dances and tribal customs, with ceremonial reappearance and change of name. Evidently the Ovimbundu share the material traits and the psychological background of initiatory rites with a very large number of tribes, which occupy the forest zones of west and central Africa.

G. Lindblom's publication, "The Use of Stilts in Africa and America," helps to explain the occurrence of stilt-walking at the final ceremonies of initiation witnessed at Cangamba. Since stilt-walking in Angola occurs chiefly in the eastern section, perhaps one should link the trait with the stilt-walking in Nyasaland, because there has been continuous communication from Angola to Nyasaland along the Zambezi valley. The stilt-walking of eastern Angola may, however, be a cultural offshoot from the southwest Congo, for according to Lindblom the stilt-walking trait occurs there, and the contacts of eastern Angola with the southwest Congo have been important.

In turning from these factors of social life to traits of a more material kind, there are points of importance to be noted in connection with food supply and industries. A possibility exists that such traits as hunting, use of certain types of musical instruments, basketry, and pottery, will indicate that the Ovimbundu, before their separation, drew some of their fundamental traits from a widely distributed matrix.

HUNTING APPLIANCES OF AFRICA

L. S. B. Leakey (A New Classification of the Bow and Arrow in Africa, *J.R.A.I.*, LVI, pp. 259–294) has dealt with the distribution of bows and arrows. Leakey states that, owing to lack of evidence, he was unable to describe the bows and arrows of Angola. I have therefore illustrated these in detail (Plate XVII, Figs. 1–9).

Some of the arrowheads used by the Ovimbundu resemble those of the Bashilele in the southwest Congo, but on the whole arrowheads used in Angola are of distinctive patterns, and presumably they represent a special local development. The round bow of the Ovimbundu and the Vacholue is like that of the southern Congo, and it is absolutely distinct from the short flat bow used in southern Angola among the Vakuanyama.

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WOMEN IN CHARGE OF TRIBAL INITIATION OF GIRLS,
VANYEMBA, NGONGO, CENTRAL ANGOLA
Fig. 1. Front view. Fig. 2. Back view

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COSTUMES WORN IN TRIBAL INITIATION CEREMONIES FOR BOYS

Fig. 1. Costume of Vangangulu and Ovin.bundu, Nyanga. Fig. 2. Ceremonial dress of mixed tribes at Kaioko

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TRIBAL INITIATION OF BOYS, VACHOKUE, CANGAMBA

Fig. 1. Novices in enclosure. Fig. 2. Public appearance after initiation

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TRIBAL INITIATION OF BOYS, VACHOKUE, CANGAMBA

Fig. 1. Hiberakkrtwoun by circumcised novices. Fig. 2. Cages in which boys lie after circumcision

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CONCLUDING CEREMONIES, TRIBAL INITIATION, CANGAMBA

Fig. 1. Stilt-walkers, Vachokue. Fig. 2. Medicine-man, Luchazi

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